



Celtic Orthodox Church

Parish of St Gwenn, Wessex

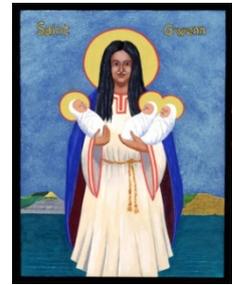
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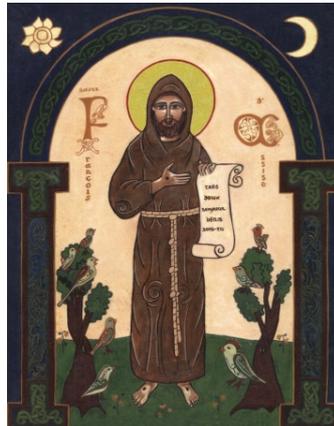
Services at St Gwenn's

Sun 1 Oct – **PENTECOST 17** – The Protecting Veil

SORRY – NO LITURGY TODAY



Wed 4 Oct – **Feast of Creation – St Francis of Assisi**



Divine Liturgy 10.00am



Sun 8 Oct – **PENTECOST 18**

Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Sun 15 Oct – **PENTECOST 19**

Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Sun 22 Oct – **PENTECOST 20**

Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Sun 29 Oct – **PENTECOST 21**

Divine Liturgy 10.30am



From your Parish Priest

Greetings dear friends – the blessing of the Lord be ever with you!

I hope I will be forgiven for being away for another Sunday this month. On 1st October I shall be on a short visit to our monastery in Brittany – the first time I will have been there this year. That Sunday is being kept at Saint Dolay, as the Feast of Creation and St Francis of Assisi (translated from 4th October). This is always a big event at our monastery and that is the reason for my visit. I shall be going with Deacon Tugdual and Diakonissa Susanna. I shall be back in time to celebrate the feast all over again here at St Gwenn's on 4th October!



Loving blessings in Christ!

Fr Leonard+

St Francis of Assisi – The Feast of Creation



Fresco at the Basilica of St Francis at Assisi

Why, you might ask, should the Celtic Orthodox Church make so much of a Latin post-Schism saint? In fact, St Francis' outlook was so very 'Celtic' in spirit that, as our late Primate Metropolitan Mael pointed out, he is "sometimes considered a spiritual heir to the Celtic monks."

Indeed, in re-establishing a Celtic spirituality and monasticism, the founder of our Monastery of the Holy Presence at Saint-Dolay, St Tugdual the New, drew inspiration from St Francis as well as the Celtic saints. So we might say that we have 'adopted' St Francis!

With St Francis' deep love of Creation – he communed with birds and animals, and called the sun, moon and stars his brothers and sisters – it is not surprising that his feast day is the day used to celebrate the Feast of Creation.

St Francis was also a great advocate of peace as his well-known prayer affirms:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy;*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled
as to console;*

*to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

In that prayer there's a clue as to why, in the fresco painting of St Francis shewn above, the saint has three hands – "it is in giving that we receive."

Dr Victor Shamas of the University of Arizona tells us that, whilst sitting looking at the fresco "I heard the following words, as if St Francis himself were speaking directly to me, '*If you offer your two hands in service to the Lord, He will provide you with a third.*' The significance of this statement is that giving away your gifts to others in the spirit of selfless service causes these gifts to multiply." Dr Shamas continues; "When we give away something of value, we open ourselves to the flow of even greater gifts. It is as if we transform ourselves into a conduit through which these gifts flow freely into the world."

Let us pray that we may be such conduits.

Celtic Orthodox Church and St Benedict – Pondering on Esther de Waal's words

*Esther de Waal is deeply influenced by Celtic Spirituality
and has written books and lectured on the subject*

In her commentary on the *Rule of St Benedict*, in dealing with St Benedict's teaching on work and its place in the monastic [and Christian] life – the importance of the balance between work and prayer – Esther de Waal laments seeing that:

"The work of human hands seems to result in waste, exploitation, pollution, a denial of the covenant that God made with men and women to cherish and to nurture the earth for the good of all God's family. That is why I am grateful for the statements about stewardship that I find coming from contemporary Benedictines. In *Of All Good Gifts* the American Benedictine sisters ask what we can do in a world that lacks any vision of the sacredness of creation or commitment to the dignity of life, and they say: 'Our answer is monastic stewardship: that we use what we are and what we have for the transformation of culture because creation is the Lord's and we are its keepers; we hold it on trust. We must remember that the earth is not so much inherited from our parents as borrowed from our children. We owe a debt to the next generation.'

Or the community of St Mary and St Louis in St Louis, founded from Ampleforth though now an independent abbey: 'Benedictines see creation as a gift of God to be lovingly nurtured so that it fulfils its purpose in serving the human family.....They do not grasp. They try not to waste. They believe that, with the humble effort to understand and co-operate with the Creator's abundant gifts, men and women can bring about on this planet a truly human life for all.'

[This could be out of a Manifesto of the Celtic Orthodox Church!]

Theosis [edited] thoughts by Abbot Tryphon

Christ's resurrection paves the way.

The fact that we Orthodox do not accept the doctrine of original sin as espoused in the West, in no way suggests that we do not need to be born again – born anew. We believe, as did the Early Church Fathers, that we inherit only the *results* of Adam's sin, not his guilt. This is known as ancestral sin because the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, resulted in our inheritance of death, sickness and an inclination toward evil. Christ's death on the cross has its power, not in an atonement sacrifice, but in the conquering of the power of death. Death is trampled down by death. It is by Christ's resurrection that a way was made for us to be transformed by contact with the Living God, thus becoming his children by adoption.



Although we do not refer to ourselves as 'saved,' as do Evangelical Christians, we nevertheless believe that we are in *need* of salvation. And we believe that salvation is a process. Our understanding of sin in an ancestral way, which is distinct from the concept of original sin and the hereditary guilt that required, consequently, a substitutionary atonement-type of sacrifice, separates us doctrinally from [Latin] Western Christianity.

Had there not been a fall, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Logos (Word) would still have incarnated into the flesh and taken on our nature. For it is by this condescension by our Creator God to take on the nature of that which He created that we are given the opportunity of being deified; as Saint Paul said we shall become as gods.

Our journey into the heart culminates in theosis, whereby we are joined in everlasting communion with the very God Who created us. Saint Athanasius of Alexandria said, "The Son of God became man, that we might become god." In 2 Peter: 1,4, we read that we have become "...partakers of divine nature." Saint Athanasius further says that theosis is "becoming by grace what God is by nature."

Homilies

From time to time, as some of you will know, I send out recordings of my "few words" for the past Sunday (or Feast). If you receive these and would like now to stop doing so, please don't feel embarrassed – just drop me a short e-mail to say no, thank you.

If, on the other hand, you do not receive my homilies/sermons and would like to, again, just send me an e-mail.

Fr Leonard

For our Prayers

For our Primate Metropolitan Marc and all our monastics, clergy and people, and for the future of the Celtic Orthodox Church, and the Western Orthodox Communion.

For Bishop Paul who returns from Saint-Dolay to his Monastery at Toms Brook early this month. For the growth of the Celtic Orthodox Church in America.

For the Unity of Christ's Church – the unity He calls us to, and which we fail to achieve.

For the vast number of people whose lives and homes have been devastated by hurricanes, earthquakes, flooding and landslides.

For speedy and lasting relief for those suffering severe FAMINE and starvation across the world.

For faithfulness to Christ's injunction to love and serve one another; for generous hearts to impel us to do and give what we can.

For PEACE and stability throughout our troubled world. For an end to the horrors of terrorism, religious extremism and radicalisation. For all persecuted Christians and other religious and ethnic groups. For the refugees forced to flee their troubled homelands and those endeavouring to deal with the refugee crisis.

For all in sickness, sorrow or distress, especially those on our prayer lists and on the hearts of all who read this. For Fr Deacon Cwyfan awaiting a new date for heart surgery.

For the departed – Eva, Charles, Fred, Monica, Leslie, Metropolitan Gabriel, Derek, David, Christine, Lily, and Jean-Pierre whose anniversaries of reposing fall this month. Memory Eternal.

